

584
A LETTER
TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM PITT.

[Price Two Shillings.]

ENTRANCE
J. T. HALL

(5)

A LETTER
TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM PITT,
ON
HIS APOSTACY
FROM THE CAUSE OF
PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.
TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED
AN APPENDIX,
CONTAINING
IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS
ON THAT SUBJECT.

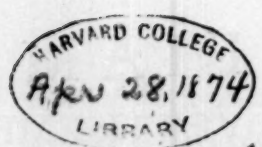
Audax venali comitatur CURIO linguâ
Vox quondam Populi libertatemque tueri
Aufus! —

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Request of
Hon. Chas. Sumner.

ADVERTISEMENT.

PUBLICATIONS on fugitive topics, though from their nature sometimes less dubiously useful to mankind than more permanent works, are so little a source of reputation, that their Authors have commonly thought it prudent to withhold their names. If an Author be obscure, such publications will not exalt him—if he be eminent, they may be supposed to derogate from the gravity of more serious occupations, or from the dignity of a more solid fame.

These common reasons may be sufficient for anonyms publication, especially in a case like the present, which consists either of argument, which a name can neither strengthen nor impair; or of facts, which are so acknowledged as to need no testimony for their support.

The Author may be supposed by some to owe an apology for the severity of the language which he has sometimes used.—The only language, however, which he could have used, on such an occasion, was that of indignant honesty. He could neither palliate truth, nor compromise virtue; nor does he profess to emulate those Courtly Writers, the gentleness of whose censures almost mitigates guilt into innocence.

W. L. P. 18

ADVERTISEMENT

WILLIAM PITT

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A LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM PITT,

Esq. &c.

Audax venali Comitatur CURIO linguâ
Vox quondam Populi libertatemque tueri
Aufus—

LUCAN PHARSALIA, *Lib. i. l. 269—71.*

SIR,

HISTORY records too many examples of political apostacy to make any case of that sort new or singular. Yet with all your knowledge in that branch of history, to which congenial sentiments must have naturally pointed your studies, I doubt whether you can produce many instances in which the political apostate,

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instead of the language which becomes his wretched situation, dares to assume the tone of parade and of triumph ; and with the most eccentric originality of insolence labours to convert his own desertion of principle into an argument against these principles themselves, instead of feeling the principles as a *stigma* on his desertion. We do not find that Curio was shameless enough, when he deserted the cause of his country, to urge against it the boldness of his own apostacy with the same confidence that Cato would have used in its support the authority of his virtue. The annals of ancient or modern apostacy contain nothing so flagrant. It was reserved for our days to add this variety to the various combinations of fraud and insolence, which have in former ages duped and oppressed mankind ; and it was peculiarly reserved for a Statesman, whose character reconciles the most repugnant extremes of political depravity, the pliancy of the most abject intrigue, with the vaunting of the most lofty hypocrisy. It was reserved

served for him, not alone silently to abandon, not alone even publicly to abjure the doctrines of his former life; not alone to oppose, with ardour, with vehemence, with virulence, those propositions from others, by which he himself had earned unmerited popularity, and climbed to unexampled power; but by a refinement of insolent apostacy, to convert into a source of obloquy against other men, a measure which had been the basis of his own reputation and importance. It was reserved for such a man to repeat those very common-place objections to the measure, and those very common-place slanders against its movers which had been urged against himself, and which he himself had justly despised, or victoriously refuted *. It was reserved for him, unblushingly

* See the debate on Mr. Pitt's motion for Parliamentary Reform on the 7th May, 1782. Compare the reply of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the alarms and arguments of Mr. T. Pitt, *proprietor of Old Sarum*, with his speech on the notice of Mr. Grey, the 30th April, 1792, in which he

blushingly to renew all the clamour against novelty, and all those affectionate alarms for the British Constitution, which patriotic borough-mongers had so successfully employed against himself. Yes, Sir, it was reserved for the son of Chatham thus to stigmatize the “dying legacy” of his father, and thus to brand his own “virgin effort.”

You will have already perceived, that it is on your late conduct in the case of Parliamentary Reform, that I am about to animadvert. Though I feel a dislike not unmixed with contempt for politics purely personal, and though I should be the last man to betray and degrade the great cause of Reform, by mingling it with the petty squabbles of party, yet when I see the authority of an apostate character opposed with impudent absurdity to the cause from which he apostatized,

expresses those alarms which he had then scouted, and retails those arguments which he had then contemned!—*Ergo refertens hac nuncius ibit Pelidæ genitori!*

I think

I think it at least fit that that obstacle should be removed, and that the vapouring language of such a delinquent should be counteracted by the merited brand of his crimes.

The cause of Reform demands that the nature of your present opposition to it should be understood by the people. The interest of the people demands that they should well understand the character of him who may yet be likely, in some possible combination of events, to offer himself to them as the champion of Reform, and perhaps ultimately to prove the leader in more extensive and dangerous measures. And it is generally fit that no signal example of triumphant apostacy should pass with impunity.

These are the public reasons, Sir, which lead me to call public attention to your conduct; reasons which have influenced one who has no respect for your principles, and no exaggerated opinion of your abilities, which he has some-

times admired without idolatry, and often opposed without fear. That I am in no abject or devoted sense a partizan, I trust even my present sentiments will prove. I am only, therefore, your enemy so far as I believe you to be the enemy of my country; and I am not unwilling to adopt for the creed of my *personal* politics the dying prayer of a great man, "*Ut ita cuique eveniat ut quisque de Republica mereatur?*"

The three general grounds then on which I shall proceed to examine your conduct are, your apostacy—your present pretexts for opposing reform—and the probability of such a future conduct in you as may render it extremely important that the people should justly appreciate your character.

Your entrance into public life was marked by circumstances more favourable than any English Statesman has ever experienced. With all the
vigor

vigor of your own talents, with all the reflected lustre of your Father's character, you appeared at a moment when the ungracious toil of opposition was almost past, when little remained but to profit by the effect of other men's efforts, and to urge the fall of a tottering Ministry, whose misconduct had already been fatally proved by national misfortune. The current of popularity had already set strongly against the Minister. The illusions of American conquest and American revenue were dispelled. The eyes of the people were opened to the folly of the Cabinet. You had only to declaim against it. The attention of the people was called to those defects in their Constitution, which permitted such a Cabinet so long to betray the public interest, and to brave the public opinion. You had only to put yourself at the head of the people, to declare yourself the Leader of Reform. In this character you had recourse to the same means, and you were assailed by the same objections, with every past and every future Leader of Reform. De-

despairing that a corrupt body should spontaneously reform itself, you invited the interposition of the people. You knew that dispersed effort must be unavailing. You therefore encouraged them to associate. You were not deterred from appealing to the people by such miserable common places of reproach as those of advertising for grievances, diffusing discontents, and provoking sedition. You well knew that in the vocabulary of corrupt power enquiry is sedition, and tranquillity is synonymous with blind and abject obedience. You were not deterred from joining with the associations of the people by being told they were to overawe Parliament. You knew the value of a jargon that does not deserve to be dignified by so high a name as Sophistry. You felt for it that contempt which every man of sense *always* feels, and which every man of *sincerity* will always express.

As you were regardless of the clamour against the necessary *means* for the accomplishment of
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your object—as you knew that whoever would substantially serve the people in such a cause, must appeal to the people, and associate with the people; so you must have had a just and a supreme contempt for the sophistry which was opposed to the measure of reforming the Representation itself. You were told (every Reformer has been told, and every Reformer will be told) that of innovations there is no end, that to adopt one is to invite a succession; and that though you knew the limits of your own Reforms, you could not prescribe bounds to the views which their success might awaken in the minds of others. To so battered a generality it was easy to oppose another common-place. It was easy to urge that as no Government could be secure if it were to be perpetually changed; so no abuse could be reformed if institutions are to be inflexibly maintained. If they call the courage of a Reformer temerity, he is equally entitled to represent their caution as cowardice. If they speak from conjecture of his future interest in

confusion,

confusion, he may from knowledge speak of their actual interest in corruption.

They told you that extravagant speculations were abroad*; that it was no moment to hope for the accomplishment of a temperate Reform, when there were so many men of mischievous and visionary principles, whom your attempts would embolden, and whom your Reforms would not content. You replied, that the redress of real grievances was the surest remedy against imaginary alarms; that the existence of acknowledged corruptions is the only circumstance that renders incendiaries formidable; and that to correct these corruptions is to wrest from them their most powerful weapon.

By a conduct thus natural you pursued your measure. Of that conduct indeed I should not now have reminded you, *had it not been for the*

* Lord Camelford's speech.

fake of contrasting it with some recent transactions. It is almost unnecessary to add that you found it easy to practise on the generous credulity of the English people, and that for the first time in the present reign, the King's advisers thought fit to chuse *their* minister from the knowledge of his being popular, actuated by the double policy of debauching a popular leader, and of surrounding with the splendour of popularity, the apostate agent of *their* will. But with the other parts of your public life I have nothing to do, nor will I trace minutely the progress of your pretended efforts for Parliamentary Reform.

The curtain was dropped in 1785. The farce then closed. Other cares then began to occupy your mind. To dupe the enthusiasts of Reform ceased to be of any further moment, and the question itself slept, until it was revived by Mr. Flood in 1790.

There

There was little danger of the success of his motion, maintained by himself with little pertinacity, and seconded neither by any Parliamentary connexion, nor by any decisive popular opinion. To it therefore you thought a languid opposition from you sufficient. You reserved more active opposition for more formidable dangers, and you abandoned the motion of Mr. Flood to the declamation of Mr. Grenville, the logic of Mr. Windham, and the invective of Mr. Burke.

That more formidable danger at length arrived. A Reform in the Representation was brought forward by a gentleman of the most powerful abilities, of high consideration in the country, and of a character the most happily untainted by any of those dubious transactions of which political parties are rarely able, for any long period to escape at least the imputation. Such a character was odious to apostacy. Such an enemy was formidable to corruption.

The

The debate on the notice of Mr. Grey illustrated the fears of corrupt men, and the malignity of apostates. It was then that alarms which had slumbered so long over incendiary writings were suddenly called forth by the dreadful suggestion of a moderate, and therefore, of a practicable Reform.

Nor is the reason of this difficult to discover. These incendiary publications might render signal service to a corrupt government, by making the cause of freedom odious, and perhaps by provoking immatured and ill-concerted tumults, the suppression of which might increase the strength, and justify the violence of Government. No such happy effects were to be hoped from the proposition of Mr. Grey. Impracticable schemes are never terrible, but that fatal proposition threatened the overthrow of corruption itself. Then your exertions were indeed demanded: Then your pious zeal for the constitution was called forth.

Theoretical

Theoretical admirers of the Constitution had indeed supposed its excellence to consist in that trial by jury which you had narrowed by excise; and its salvation to depend on that liberty of the press which you had scared by prosecution. Such might have been the idle ravings of Locke or Montesquieu. But you well knew its practical excellence to depend on very different things.

Already, in your imagination, that citadel of the Constitution *Queenborough*, that sanctuary of freedom *Midhurst*, tottered to their foundations. Already, even *Cornwall* itself, the holy land of freedom, was pierced by the impious din of Reform. Actuated by alarms so honest and so wise, for such sacred bulwarks of the Constitution, no wonder that you magnanimously sacrificed your own character. No wonder that you stooped to rake together every clumsy sophism, and every malignant slander that the most frontless corruption had ever circulated, or the most stupid credulity believed. Nor was it
even

even wonderful, when we consider it in this view, that you should have pronounced an elaborate, a solemn, a malignant invective, against the principles which you yourself had professed, the precise measures which you had promoted, and the very means which you had chosen for their accomplishment. There is something in such a parade of apostacy, which, in the minds of *certain persons*, may efface those vestiges of distrust and repugnance, that the recollection of a popular conduct in early life must have imprinted.

The disgraceful triumph of that night will indeed long be remembered by those who were indignant spectators of it. A Minister reprobating associations, and condemning any mode of collecting the opinion of the people for the purpose of influencing the House of Commons.—**HE** who commenced his career by being an Associator, and who avowedly placed all his hopes of success in the authority which general opinion

opinion was to have over the House of Commons. HE who continued a Minister in defiance of the House of Commons, because he supposed himself to possess the confidence of the people. HE who gave the first example of legitimating and embodying the opinion of the people against the voice of their representatives*. HE was the Minister who adopted this language. It was not, Sir, on that night to the splendor of your words, nor the music of your periods, that you owed the plaudits of the borough-mongers of Wiltshire or of Cornwall. They take no cognizance of any dexterities of sophistry or felicities of declamation; the pompous nothingness of ABERCORN, and the sordid barbarity of ROLLE, are more on a level with their under-

* These remarks are neither stated to justify or to condemn the conduct of Mr. Pitt in the celebrated contest of 1784. They are merely intended to contrast his then measures with his present professions, and that any example of inconsistency so gross and notorious is to be found in the black annals of apostacy, I am yet to learn.

standing

standing and more in unison with their taste. They applauded you for virtues like their own, for impudence in asserting falsehood, for audacity in defending corruption. Their assent was condemnation—their applause was ignominy—Their disgraceful *bear hims* ought to have called to your recollection the depth of infamy into which you had at length plunged. They were the very usurpers whom you pledged yourself to your country to attack ; and at the only time of your life when your conduct had the semblance of virtue, these are the men in whose enmity you would have justly gloried. At that time your claim on the confidence of the people would have been almost solely founded on the virulence of hostility, and the vehemence of clamor which such men would employ against you. And these *therefore* are the men whose applause now justly seals the sentence of your apostacy.

Nor, SIR, is this brief history of that apostacy more flagrant than the plain statement of

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your pretexts will appear absurd. The frank and good-natured prostitution of DUNDAS, which assumes no disguise, and affects no principle, almost disarms censure, and relaxes us into a sort of contemptuous indulgence for one whom we can neither hate nor respect. The unblushing steadiness of avowed Toryism, whether it frowns in Thurlow, or sneaks in Hawkesbury, we can neither blame as inconsistent, nor dread as contagious. Many men may be intimidated by their power, and many seduced by their corruption, but no man is deceived by their professions. It is not therefore to such men that the FRIEND of the PEOPLE desires to point their jealousy and their resentment. Against such men it is not necessary to guard them. But it will, indeed, be his duty to detect the *pretenses* by which the specious and successful hypocrite not only disguises his own character, but triumphantly deludes the people.

It

It is now then fit to examine those *pretents* by which you would evade the ignominy of having deserted your cause. Such a discussion is not only necessary to convict you, but to the defence of those whom you have attacked. For unless the fallacy of these pretenses be exposed, the Friends of Reform may be branded as the thoughtless or malignant disturbers of their country, while the apostate from Reform may be regarded as the provident and honest preserver of its quiet. It is only by the exposure of his pretenses that this apostate can be shown in his genuine character, sacrificing for the preservation of corrupt power, not only the present liberty, but the future probable peace of his country.

Let us then, SIR, consider what those pretenses are, by which you labour to ascribe to infamy or profligacy in 1792, that attempt to reform, which in 1782 was the purest exertion of the most heroic patriotism. By what sort of *chronological* morality virtue could so shortly

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have been transmuted into vice, may be in itself a curious enquiry. Has the generous enthusiasm of your youth been corrected by the juster views of experience? Has it been repressed by the selfish coldness of advancing years? Or has it been laid asleep by the genial indulgences, and the seductive blandishments of power? Such are the questions which a discussion of your pretexts must resolve.

You are in the first place pleased to inform us, that those grievances which once so clamorously pleaded for a Reform of Parliament, have, under your wise and virtuous Administration, ceased to exist. The reasons, if we may believe the Duke of Richmond and yourself, which then justified Reform, no longer operate. The nation is prosperous. The people are contented. The statement of facts is as incontestibly true, as the inference from it is impudently false. It is because the nation is prosperous, it is because the people are tranquil, that this is an auspicious moment
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for averting from our country calamities which a corrupt House of Commons (by your confession) did *once* produce ; and which therefore an unreformed House of Commons may again equally occasion.

The logic of apostacy is happily on a level with its morals. In 1782, when general discontent might indeed have furnished some colour for an alarm that Reform would degenerate into convulsion, then you and that noble Duke placed yourselves at the head of different bodies of Reformers. You suppose, it seems, that change is only to be attempted with safety, and bounded by moderation, when the temper of the people is inflamed, and exasperated by a succession of public calamities.

Such is the reasoning, such the politics of these honest Patriots, and accomplished Legislators ! Other men might have supposed, that a state of convulsion and irritation was not the temper in

which moderate Reforms were likely to be adopted by the people ; and that to defer all proposition of Reform until grievances should produce again such a fatal state, was to delay them to a moment when there would infallibly be no choice, but to take refuge in despotism, or to plunge into civil war. The very circumstance of the content of the people is that which gives us a perfect security, that Reforms will not be hurried away into violence. It is therefore that which most powerfully invites all men to exertion, who desire a wise and measured improvement of the Constitution.

Granting even that no *actual* or urgent evil arises from the corrupt state of the pretended Representation of the People—Granting that it has not within the last eight years cost us thirteen Colonies, a hundred thousand lives, and the accumulation of a hundred and fifty millions of debt—Making all these concessions, what argument do they furnish to you ? Are the *necessary tendencies*

tendencies of an institution no reason for reforming it? Is it because these *tendencies* are suspended by some accidental circumstance, that we are to tolerate them until they are again called forth into destructive energy? Had you been a Senator under TITUS, if any man had proposed controls on the despotic authority of the Emperor, and if he had justified his proposition by reminding the Senate of the ferocity of Nero, or the brutality of Vitellius, you must, on such a principle, have opposed to his arguments the happiness derived from the existing Government, till your sophistry was confuted, and your servility rewarded by DOMITIAN.

It is thus easy to expose your pretexts, even without disputing your assumptions. But it is time to retract concessions which truth does not permit, and to prove that the absurdity of your conclusions is equalled by the falsehood of those premises on which they are established.

The question, whether those grievances now exist, which in your opinion once justified a Parliamentary Reform, will be best decided by considering the nature of such grievances, and the tendency of such a Reform to redress them. The grievance is, the perpetual acquiescence of the House of Commons in the dictates of the Ministers of the Crown. The source of this grievance is the enormous influence of the Crown in the House of Commons. The remedy is, to render that House, by changing the modes of its election, and shortening the duration of its trust, dependent upon the people, instead of being dependent upon the Crown.

Such is the brief state of the subject. Can you then have the insolence to assert, that the influence has decreased in your time, or that it has produced a less abject acquiescence? That influence and that acquiescence are the grievances which are to be reformed; and as no impudence can deny that they exist in their full force, so no sophistry

fophistry can escape the inference, that the necessity for reforming them remains undiminished. Have majorities in your time been less devoted? Have the measures of the Court been less indiscriminately adopted? Has the voice of the people been less neglected? Has the voice of the Minister been less obeyed? Not one of these things are true; not one, therefore, of the reasons for Reform have ceased to operate.

But to argue the question in this manner is to do injustice to its strength. It is not only true that the acquiescence of Parliament has not been less indiscriminate; it is not only true that the House of Commons have betrayed no symptoms of such ungovernable independence and impracticable virtue, as might seem to render its Reform less necessary or less urgent; but it is uncontroversially true, that your recent experience furnishes a more fantastic example of that ignominious servitude, from which Reform can only rescue the Commons, than any other that is to be found in

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our history. I allude to your Russian armament, which I do not bring forward that I may speak of its absurdity, because I will not stoop to wound a prostrate enemy, nor to insult a convicted criminal. I allude to it only as an example of the parade with which the dependence of the House of Commons on the Minister was exhibited to an indignant country. On former occasions it had been equally corrupt; on former occasions it had been equally absurd; but on no former occasion had it displayed such ostentatious and *versatile* dependence. The Minister in one session determines on his armament. His obsequious majority register the edict; but the absurdity, the odium, and the unpopularity of the measure, shake the resolution of the Cabinet. The voice of the people, despised by their pretended representatives, is listened to by the Minister. The House of Commons are at his nod ready to plunge their country into the most ruinous and unjust war; but the body of the people declare their sentiments, and the Minister recedes. He
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commands his majority to retrace their steps, to condemn their former proceedings, and thus to declare most emphatically, that their interest is not the interest, that their voice is not the voice of the people. The obsequious majority obey without a murmur. “*Tibi summum rerum judicium dii dedere—nobis obsequii gloria relicta est.*”

Nothing could more forcibly illustrate the mockery and nullity of what is strangely called the Representation of the People, than this splendid victory of public opinion. The Minister yielded to that natural authority of public opinion, which is independent of forms of Government, and which would have produced the same effect in most of the simple monarchies of civilized Europe. The Cabinet of Versailles would have been compelled to exhibit a similar deference to the general sentiment before the fall of their despotism; and the people of England experienced no more aid from their supposed Representatives, than if the House of Commons had
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been in form and avowal, what it is in truth and substance, a chamber for registering ministerial edicts.

Thus wretched are the pretexts to which you have been driven. It is not only easy to expose the emptiness and futility of these pretexts, but to establish with all the evidence of which any topic of civil prudence is susceptible, that the *circumstances of the times*, instead of rendering it dangerous to attempt a Reform in our Constitution, make it infinitely dangerous to delay such a Reform.

On the French Revolution, it is not my intention to offer any observations. It has no natural nor direct relation to my subject, and were I disposed to treat it, it would be my aim to attempt what has not *hitherto* been attempted, and what perhaps it may *yet* be too early to execute with success, an impartial and philosophical estimate of the most unexampled event in history. But
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on its *intrinsic* merits it is not now my province to observe. I have only to consider it as marking the present time, either as auspicious or inauspicious to attempts to reform our Constitution. These attempts to obtain Reform disclaim all alliance with the magnificent principles, or the perilous speculations, by which men, according to their various prepossessions, will suppose our neighbours to have been nobly animated or fatally deluded.

Whether the boldness of these principles, and the wideness of these speculations, be as reconcilable with the order of freedom as they were instrumental in the destruction of tyranny, is a question on which wise men will not be prone to anticipate the decision of experience. But the schemes of Reform which we have now in view, the only Reforms which, under the circumstances I could approve, are founded on other principles, on sentiments long naturalized among us, on notions of liberty purely English.

Not

Not engaged either in the discussion or defence of the French Revolution, we then have only to contemplate it as it is supposed to render the present moment favourable or unfavourable to meditated Reforms in England. In this view it will be easy to prove, that the probable future influence of that Revolution, *whatever be its issue*, on the general sentiments of Europe, marks the *present moment* as that in which a Reform of the English Constitution is not only safe and prudent, but urgent and indispensable. Nothing indeed can be more evident, than that a mighty change in the direction of the public sentiments of Europe is likely to arise from that Revolution, whether it be successful or unsuccessful. If it be successful, the spirit of extreme Democracy is likely to spread over all Europe, and to swallow up in a volcanic eruption every remnant of Monarchy and of Nobility in the civilized world. The probability of such effects is so strongly believed by the enemies of that Revolution, that it is the ground of their alarm, the subject of their

invective,

invective, and the pretext of their hostilities. It was to prevent such consequences, that Mr. Burke so benevolently counselled the Princes of Europe to undertake that *crusade* in which they are now so piously engaged.

If, on the other hand, the efforts of France be unsuccessful; if her liberties be destroyed, there can be little doubt that such a shock will most powerfully impel the current of opinion to the side of Monarchy; a direction in which it will be likely for several ages to continue. The example of the destruction of the great French republic would diffuse dismay and submission among a multitude, who only judge by events; and the bloody scenes which must attend such a destruction, would indeed be sufficient to appall the sternest and most ardent champions of Liberty. The spirit of Europe would crouch under the dark shade of Despotism, in dead repose and fearful obedience. The Royal confederacy which had effected this subversion, would doubtless

less continue its concert and its efforts. The principle of maintaining the internal independence of nations, being destroyed by the example of France, no barrier would any longer be opposed to the arbitrary will of Kings. The internal laws of all the European States would be dictated by a Counsel of Despots, and thus the influence of moral causes on public opinion, co-operating with the combined strength and policy of Princes, "every faint vestige and loose remnant" of free government will be swept from the face of the earth.

In either alternative England cannot be exempt from the general spirit. If the phrenzy of Democracy be excited by the success of France; if the spirit of abject submission and of triumphant Despotism be produced by her failure, in the first event the peace, in the second the liberty of England is endangered. In the first event a furious Republicanism, in the second a desperate Toryism is likely to pervade the country. Against
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the prevalence of both extremes there only exists one remedy. It is to invigorate the democratic part of the Constitution ; it is to render the House of Commons so honestly and substantially the representative of the people, that Republicans may no longer have topics of invective, nor Ministers the means of corruption. If the one spirit prevail, it is necessary to reform the House of Commons, that the discontents of the people may be prevented. If the other spirit prevails, the same Reform is necessary, that it may be strong enough to resist the encroachments of the Crown. In the one case, to prevent our Government from being changed into a pure Democracy ; in the other, to prevent it from being changed into a simple Monarchy. In either event the same precaution is necessary. The same Reform will preserve the English Constitution from the sap of Royal influence, and from the storm of tumultuous Democracy. A Constitution which provided a pure representative of the people, and which included only enough of Monarchy for vigor, and only

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enough

enough of Aristocracy for deliberation, would bid a just defiance to the most magnificent and seductive visions of democratic enthusiasm. A people who felt that they possessed a vigorous popular control on their Government, could see little obnoxious, and nothing formidable in the powers of the Peerage and the Crown, and would feel none of that discontent which alone could make them accessible to the arts of Republican missionaries. The success of the French, the fascinating example of their superb Democracy will have no dangerous effects on the minds of *contented* ENGLISHMEN. But what wisdom can avert the effects which must arise from such a model of representation, and such a spirit as the success of France will produce in Europe, if that spirit is to operate on a dissatisfied people, and that model be perpetually compared with the ruins of a free Government. In the alternative then of the success of the French Revolution, nothing surely can be so indispensable as a speedy Reform in the Representation of the People.

That

That to infuse a new portion of popular vigor into the House of Commons is the only remedy that can be opposed to the triumphant Toryism which the subversion of the French Republic must produce, is a proposition so evident, as neither to demand proof nor to admit illustration. We have seen the influence of an odious and unpopular Court victorious during a long reign, in hostility to the prejudice, and in defiance of the jealousy of the people. What then are we to expect from that increased and increasing influence, conducted perhaps with more dexterity in the Cabinet, seconded with equal devotion in the House of Commons, and aided by the blind enthusiasm of a people, who are intoxicated by commercial prosperity, and infatuated by all the prejudices of the most frantic Toryism? Under such a state of things, what can prevent the formation of an uncontrolled Monarchy, and the absorption of every power by a Court, from which Englishmen are to learn what remnant of personal security it will vouchsafe to spare, what

formality of public freedom it will deign to endure, with what image of the Constitution it will indulge and amuse an infatuated rabble.

Such are the effects which the success or the subversion of French Democracy seem calculated to produce on the temper and sentiments of the European nations. This therefore is the moment to repair and to strengthen the English Constitution. The fate of France hangs in suspense. Her success is yet too dubious, widely or dangerously to diffuse a spirit of imitation; and the contest between her and the Despotic League is still too equal to plunge the people of Europe into the lethargy of servility or despair. This then is that pause of tranquillity, during which we have to prepare against the hurricane with which we are menaced. This therefore is the moment when what was before expedient is become necessary; when that Reform is now safe, which in future may be impracticable or dangerous. Reform was before useful to improve;

prove; it is now necessary (and perhaps the period of its efficacy is shorter than we may imagine) to preserve the Government. Menaced by the predominance of a Democratical or a Monarchical spirit, give the people their rights, and they will not be provoked to demand more; create an independent House of Commons, and the power of the Crown will be checked; Despotism and tumult will be equally averted; the peace of the country will be preserved; the liberty of the country will be immortalized.

Such a moment must have been chosen by a Statesman, who to an enlightened love for public tranquillity united an honest zeal for political Reform. Such a moment therefore was not chosen by You. The opportunities which it furnished, and the public duties which it imposed, you neither felt nor regarded. But it afforded an opportunity of another kind, which you did not neglect, and of which, I must confess, you have availed yourself with no mean dexterity.

The discussions produced by the French Revolution had given birth to exaggerated ideas of liberty on one hand, and had furnished a ground to some men, and a pretext to more, for exaggerated fears of anarchy on the other. No such ferment of the human mind had ever arisen without producing many extravagant opinions. Every passion and every frailty, in the ardor of dispute, seduced men into extremes. Many honest men were driven into Toryism by their fears. Many sober men were betrayed into Republicanism by their enthusiasm. Such a division of sentiment was precisely that which a good Minister would labor to heal; but which a crafty Minister would inflame into faction, that he might use it to strengthen and extend his power. You had to chuse under which of these characters you were to pass to posterity, and you have made your election. It was in your choice to mitigate extremes, to conciliate differences, to extend the impartial beneficence of Government to all parties and sects of citizens. But you chose to take the
most

most effectual means to exaggerate extremes, to inflame differences, to give the sanction and countenance of power to one party, to put the Government of the country at the head of a triumphant faction. You disseminated alarms of designs to subvert the Constitution so widely and so successfully, that you have created in this country a spirit of Toryism more indiscriminate, more abject, and more rancorous than has existed in England since the accession of the House of Hanover. Bigotry animates servility, servility mingles with the fear of confusion; the honest fear of confusion becomes the dupe of the corrupt monopolists of power; and from the fermentation of these various passions practised on by your emissaries, there has arisen a pusillanimous and merciless Toryism, which is ready to support the most corrupt Minister, and to proscribe the most temperate advocates of freedom. No spirit could be so valuable to a Minister; nothing could ensure him such cheap and indiscriminate support. You could not fail

to recollect the happy use which the dread of Jacobitism was of to Sir Robert Walpole, and you easily saw that the dread of Republicanism might be an equally successful engine in your hands. The reformers of abuse are in such cases called enemies to establishment—The enemies of the *Government* are to be called enemies of the Constitution. To have proposed the retrenchment of a *Tellership* of the *Exchequer* from a Walpole, was once to aim at the introduction of the Pretender; to doubt the consistency of William Pitt, or to impeach the purity of George Rose ! is now to meditate the establishment of a democracy.

The progress of such a valuable spirit you saw with a joy which your hirelings boasted, which your higher dependents but ill dissimulated, and which was even clumsily concealed by the plausible and pompous hypocrisy of your own character. What wonder that you should see with rapture and triumph the likelihood of even honest
men

men gratuitously enrolling themselves among your Janissaries—What did it import to you, that in the mean while the phrenzy of Republicanism was likely to gain ground among a populace, provoked into wild extremes by the wild extremes of their superiors? What signified the dangers that might in time arise from the awakening understanding of SCOTLAND, from the honest indignation of IRELAND? What were these dangers to you! The Toryism of the higher classes would *last your time*, and any collision between the opposite orders in society, which the diffusion of extreme opinions among them might produce, was viewed without terror by him whose heart had no virtuous interest in the future fate of his country.

It had not however appeared necessary to declare by any overt act the alliance of Government with the favored faction, till an attempt was made to mediate between parties, and to avert the evils which impended over the country.

An

An association of gentlemen was formed for these purposes. They erected the standard of the British Constitution. They were likely, by the liberality of their principles, to reclaim every thinking man who had been seduced into Republicanism, and by the moderation of their views, to attract every honest man who had for a moment been driven into Toryism. They had already almost effected an union of the friends of liberty and order, and reduced to a miserable handful the two extreme factions; the dread of one of which, and the fury of the other, were to be the instruments of your power.

Such a danger demanded an extreme remedy. No man has more studied or more experienced the *gullibility* of mankind than yourself. You knew that the popular grossness would not distinguish between what it was your policy to confound. You therefore issued a PROCLAMATION, which by directing a vague and indiscriminate odium against all political change, confounded
in

in the same storm of unpopularity the wildest projects of subversion, and the most measured plans of Reform.

A Statesman, emboldened by success, and instructed by experience in all the arts of popular delusion, easily perceived the affailable position of every MEDIATORIAL party, the various enemies they provoke, the opposite imputations they incur. In their labors to avert that fatal collision of the opposite orders of society, which the diffusion of extreme principles threatened, you saw that they would be charged by the corrupt with violence, and accused by the violent of insincerity. It was easy you knew to paint moderation as the virtue of cowards, and compromise as the policy of knaves, to the stormy and intolerant enthusiasm of faction; and the malignant alarms of the corrupt would, it is obvious, be forward to brand every moderate sentiment and every mediatorial effort as symptoms of collusion with the violent, and of treachery to the cause of public order.

order. It scarcely required the incentive and the sanction of a solemn public measure from the Government to let loose so many corrupt interests and malignant passions on the natural object of their enmity. But such a sanction and incentive might certainly add something to the activity of these interests, and to the virulence of these passions. Such a sanction and incentive you therefore gave in your Proclamation. To brand mediation as treachery, and neutrality as disguised hostility; to provoke the violent into new indiscretions, and to make those indiscretions the means of aggravating the Toryism of the timid by awakening their alarms; to bury under one black and indiscriminate obloquy of licentiousness the memory of every principle of freedom; to rally round the banners of religious persecution, and of political corruption, every man in the kingdom who dreads anarchy, and who deprecates confusion; to establish on the broadest foundation oppression and servility for the present, and to heap up in store all the causes of anarchy and civil commotion for
future

future times ; such is the malignant policy, such are the mischievous tendencies, such are the experienced effects of that PROCLAMATION. It is sufficient that, *for the present*, it converts the kingdom into a camp of janissaries, enlisted by their alarms to defend your power. It is indeed well adapted to produce other remoter and collateral effects, which the *far-sighted* politics of the Addressers have not discerned. It is certainly well calculated to blow into a flame that spark of Republicanism which moderation must have extinguished, but which may, in future *conceivable circumstances*, produce effects, at the suggestion of which good men will shudder, and on which wise men will rather meditate than descant. It is certain that in this view your Proclamation is as effectual in irritating some men into Republicanism, as Mr. Paine's pamphlets have been in frightening others into Toryism.

Perhaps, however, the events which such a spirit might produce, are contingencies that enter
into

into the calculations of certain Statesmen. Perhaps they anticipate the moment when the Republican mob of the lower orders may be as valuable to them as the Tory vulgar of the higher are now. Perhaps they may deem it a master stroke of Machiavelian policy to foment the animosity of two factions, one of whom maintains the present Dictator, and the other of whom may aggrandize the future Demagogue.

Such a policy is not altogether improbable ; and if the eternal alliance of wisdom with virtue could be broken, might not be thought altogether unwise. The man who was capable of it would not be deceived by the present appearance of prosperity and content. He would easily see, how rapidly public calamity, acting upon Republican theories, might change the scene ; far less would be hindered by the present appearances of furious loyalty among some of the lower classes of society. He would perceive this state of sentiment to be the forced produce of artificial causes, and he
could

could anticipate the violence with which they would rebound to an opposite extreme, more natural to their situation, more congenial to their feelings, and more gratifying to their pride.

The success of such a policy would certainly demand in the Statesman who adopted it an union of talents and dispositions which are not often combined. Cold, stern, crafty, and ambiguous, he must be, without those entanglements of friendship and those restraints of feeling, by which tender natures are held back from desperate enterprizes. No ingenuoufness must betray a glimpse of his designs ; no compunction must suspend the stroke of his ambition. He must never be seduced into any honest profession of *precise* public principle, which might afterwards arise against him as the record of his apostacy ; he must be prepared for acting every inconsistency, by perpetually veiling his political professions in the *no-meaning* of lofty generalities. The absence of gracious and popular manners, which can find no place

place in such a character will be well compensated by the austere and ostentatious virtues of infensibility. He must possess the parade without the restraints of morals. He must unite the most profound dissimulation with all the ardor of enterprize; he must be prepared by one part of his character for the violence of a multitude, and by another for the duplicity of a Court. If such a man arose at any critical moment in the fortune of a State; if he were unfettered by any great political connexion; if his interest were not linked to the stability of public order by any ample property; if he could carry with him to any enterprize no little authority and splendor of character; he indeed would be an object of more rational dread than a thousand Republican pamphleteers.

Against such a man it would be fit to warn the people whom he might delude, and the opulent whom he might destroy. Whether such be the character of any living Statesman, it belongs to History to determine.

I shall dwell no longer on portraits that may be imaginary, and speculations which may be illusive. The dangers which have haunted my imagination may be unreal; but if ever such dangers should be realized in a moment of public calamity, and if public confidence should then be triumphantly seized by a convicted delinquent, like the present Minister of England; if the people should then forget the blackest treachery to their cause, and the meanest malignity against their friends; then indeed the parade of your confidence in popular folly will be justified; and a contempt for the understanding of the people will be proved to be the best requisite for ruling them absolutely, as well as the best proof of having estimated them correctly.

If such be the state of the People of England, no human power can save them; they must be abandoned to their misfortunes and to your delusions. In the confidence that they are more generous, and more wise, I have now arraigned

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you

you before their tribunal. Events will decide whether my respect or your contempt be best founded, and the decision involves the fate of liberty and of our country.

I will not conclude this letter with expressions of respect which I do not entertain, but I will close it with confidently asserting, that every line of it contains the unbiaſſed ſentiments of

AN HONEST MAN.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

OPINION OF MR. LOCKE ON REPRESENTATION.

“ **T**HINGS of this world are in so constant a flux, that
“ nothing remains long in the same state. Thus
“ people, riches, trade, power, change their stations, flourish-
“ ing mighty cities come to ruin, and prove in time ne-
“ glected desolate corners, whilst other unfrequented places
“ grow into populous countries, filled with wealth and in-
“ habitants. But things not always changing equally, and
“ private interest often keeping up customs and privileges,
“ when the reasons of them are ceased, it often comes to
“ pass, that in governments, where part of the legislative
“ consists of representatives chosen by the people, that in
“ tract of time this representation becomes very unequal and
“ disproportionate to the reasons it was at first established
“ upon. To what gross absurdities the following of custom,
“ when reason has left it, may lead, we may be satisfied,
“ when we see the bare name of a town, of which there re-
“ mains not so much as the ruins, where scarce so much
“ housing as a sheep-cot, or more inhabitants than a shepherd
“ is to be found, sends as many *Representatives* to the grand
“ Assembly of Law makers, as a whole county, numerous
A “ in

APPENDIX.

" in people, and powerful in riches. This strangers stand
 " amazed at, and every one must confess needs a remedy.
 " For it being the interest, as well as the intention of the
 " people to have a fair and *equal Representative*; whoever
 " brings it nearest to that, is an undoubted FRIEND TO,
 " AND ESTABLISHER OF THE GOVERNMENT, and can-
 " not miss the consent and approbation of the community.
 " 'Tis not a change from the present state, which perhaps
 " corruption or decay has introduced, that makes an inroad
 " upon the Government, but the tendency of it to injure or
 " oppress the people, and to set up one part, or party, with
 " a distinction from, and an unequal subjection of the rest."

Locke on Civil Government, Book II:

Chap. 13. Sect. 157, 158.

No. II.

OPINION OF MR. JUSTICE BLACKSTONE.

" THIS is the SPIRIT of our Constitution: not that I
 " assert it is in fact quite so perfect as I have here en-
 " deavoured to describe it; for, if any alteration might be
 " wished or suggested in the present frame of Parliaments,
 " it should be in favour of a more COMPLEAT REPRESENTEN-
 " TATION OF THE PEOPLE.

Blackstone's Commentaries, Vol. 1. Page 171, 172.

Such is the confession extorted by the force of truth from our cautious and courtly commentator.

No. III.

No. III.

Extracts from a letter written by the Duke of Richmond to Lieutenant Colonel Sharman, Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence at Belfast, dated August 15th, 1783.

“ I have no hesitation in saying, that from every consideration which I have been able to give to this great question, that for many years has occupied my mind; and from every day’s experience to the present hour I am more and more convinced, that the restoring the right of voting universally to every man not incapacitated by nature for want of reason, or by law for the commission of crimes, together with annual elections, is the only reform that can be effectual and permanent. I am further convinced, that it is the only reform that is practicable. The lesser reform (*alluding to Mr. Pitt’s motion in the House of Commons*) has been attempted with every possible advantage in its favor; not only from the zealous support of the advocates for a more equal one, but from the assistance of men of great weight both in and out of power. But with all those temperaments and helps it has failed; not one *profelyte* has been gained from *corruption*, nor has the least ray of hope been held out from any quarter, that the House of Commons was inclined to adopt any other mode of reform. The weight of corruption has crushed this more gentle, as it would have defeated any more efficacious plan in the same circumstances. From that quarter, therefore, I have nothing to hope. It is from the people

“ at large that I expect any good, and I am convinced that
 “ the only way to make them feel that they are really
 “ concerned in the business, is to contend for their full,
 “ clear, and indisputable rights of universal representation.
 “ But in the more liberal and great plan of universal repre-
 “ sentation a clear and distinct principle at once appears,
 “ that cannot lead us wrong. Not CONVENIENCY, but
 “ RIGHT. If it is not a maxim of our Constitution, that a
 “ British subject is to be governed only by laws to which
 “ he has consented by himself or his representative, we
 “ should instantly abandon the error; but if it is the essen-
 “ tial of Freedom, founded on the eternal principles of jus-
 “ tice and wisdom, and our unalienable birth-right, we
 “ should not hesitate in asserting it. Let us then but deter-
 “ mine to act upon this broad principle of giving to every
 “ man his own, and we shall immediately get rid of all the
 “ perplexities to which the narrow notions of partiality and
 “ exclusion must ever be subject.”

No. IV.

OPINION OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

Guildhall, Tuesday, April 11, 1782.

“ AT a meeting of the Livery of London, appointed to
 “ correspond with the Committees of the several counties,
 “ cities, &c. of the kingdom,”

Mr. ALDERMAN CROSEY in the Chair.

“ Resolved Unanimously,

“ THAT in the judgment of this Committee, unless a
 “ melioration of Parliament can be obtained, the best official
 “ regulations

“ regulations may soon be set aside, the wisest and most virtuous ministers may soon be displaced ; by the prevalence of that corrupt influence now subsisting in the House of Commons, which its defective frame naturally generates, and which has already so nearly effected the ruin of this unhappy country.”

No. V.

OPINION OF ASSOCIATED ENGLISH COUNTIES.

Extracts from the proceedings of a Meeting of Deputies appointed by the several petitioning or associated bodies hereinafter mentioned.

The counties of York, Surry, Hertford, Huntingdon, Middlesex, Essex, Kent, Devon, and Nottingham, and the city of Westminster, held on the 3rd day of March, and by different adjournments on the 10th, 17th, 19th, 24th, and 31st days of March, and 21st day of April, 1781,

“ Resolved,

“ That the parliamentary representation of this kingdom is extremely inadequate.”

“ Resolved,

“ That the extensive public evils have been produced by the gross inadequacy of the representation of the people in parliaments.”

APPENDIX.

No. VI.

Thatched House Tavern, May 16, 1782.

“ AT a numerous and respectable meeting of members of
“ parliament friendly to a Constitutional Reformation, and
“ of members of several committees of counties and cities,

P R E S E N T,

The Duke of RICHMOND,	The Hon. WILLIAM PITT,
Lord SURREY,	The Rev. Mr. WYVILL,
Lord MAHON,	Major CARTWRIGHT,
The LORD MAYOR,	Mr. JOHN HORNE TOOKE,
Sir WATKIN LEWES,	Alderman WILKES,
Mr. DUNCOMBE,	Doctor JEBB,
Sir C. WRAY,	Mr. CHURCHILL,
Mr. B. HOLLIS,	Mr. FROST,
Mr. WITHERS,	&c. &c. &c.

“ Resolved unanimously,

“ That the motion of the HON. WILLIAM PITT, on the
“ 7th inst. for the appointment of a Committee of the House
“ of Commons to enquire into the State of the Representa-
“ tion of the People of Great Britain, and to report the same
“ to the House, and also what steps it might be necessary to
“ take, having been defeated by a motion for the order of
“ the day, it is become indispensibly necessary that applica-
“ tion should be made to Parliament by petitions from the
“ collective body of the people, in their respective districts,
“ requesting a substantial Reformation of the Commons
“ House of Parliament.

“ Resolved

APPENDIX.

“ Resolved unanimously,
“ That this meeting, considering that a general applica-
“ tion by the collective body of the people to the House of
“ Commons cannot be made before the close of the present
“ session, is of opinion that THE SENSE OF THE PEOPLE
“ SHOULD BE TAKEN AT SUCH TIMES AS MAY BE CON-
“ VENIENT DURING THIS SUMMER, IN ORDER TO LAY
“ THEIR SEVERAL PETITIONS BEFORE PARLIAMENT
“ EARLY IN THE NEXT SESSION, WHEN THEIR PRO-
“ POSALS FOR A PARLIAMENTARY REFORMATION
“ (WITHOUT WHICH NEITHER THE LIBERTY OF THE
“ NATION CAN BE PRESERVED, NOR THE PERMA-
“ NENCE OF A WISE AND VIRTUOUS ADMINISTRA-
“ TION CAN BE SECURE) MAY RECEIVE THAT AMPLE
“ AND MATURE DISCUSSION, WHICH SO MOMENTOUS A
“ QUESTION DEMANDS.”

No. VII.

UNTIL the report of the Committee of the Friends of the People on the present state of the Representation shall appear, the following may serve as a specimen of the wretched tenure by which the privileges and liberties of the People of England are now held.

“ If we take the places where the majority of the electors
“ comes below 20, it is shameful what a proportion of the
“ 513 (members for England and Wales) is sent into the
“ House by a handful, and that handful mostly people in
“ low circumstances, and therefore obnoxious to bribery, or
“ under the power of their superiors.

APPENDIX.

	Sends members			Chosen by
" Lestwithiel	—	2	—	13
" Truro	—	2	—	14
" Bodmin	—	2	—	19
" Saltash	—	2	—	15
" Camelford	—	2	—	10
" Boffiney	—	2	—	11
" St. Michael	—	2	—	14
" St. Mawes	—	2	—	16
" Tiverton	—	2	—	14
" Malden	—	2	—	14
" Harwich	—	2	—	17
" Thetford	—	2	—	17
" Brackley	—	2	—	17
" Banbury	—	2	—	11
" Bath	—	2	—	17
" Newport, Wight		2	—	13
" Newton, ditto	—	2	—	1
" Andover	—	2	—	13
" Gatton	—	2	—	11
" Bramber	—	2	—	8
" East Grinstead	—	2	—	19
" Calne	—	2	—	18
" Malmfbury	—	2	—	7
" Old Sarum	—	2	—	1
" Bewdley	—	2	—	18
" New Romney	—	2	—	17
" Marlborough	—	2	—	2
" Buckingham	—	2	—	7
		<hr/> 56		<hr/> 364

" Here

“ Here we see 56 members (about a ninth-part of the
“ whole for England) are sent into the House of Commons
“ by 364 votes, which number ought not to send in one
“ member. For no member ought to be elected by fewer
“ than the majority of 800, upon the most moderate calcu-
“ lation, in order to give 410,000 voters their due and
“ equally distributed share of legislative power, without
“ which equal distribution the majority of the men of pro-
“ perty are enslaved to the handful of beggars, who, by
“ electing the majority of the House of Commons, have so
“ great an overbalance of power over them, as to be able to
“ carry every point in direct opposition to their opinion and
“ to their interest.”

Burgh's Political Disquisitions, vol. I. page 47—8.

No. VIII.

Sentiments delivered by Mr. Pitt on Parliamentary Reform,
in his speech in the House of Commons, on Monday the
19th of April, 1785.

“ HE said he was sensible of the difficulty which there
“ was now, and ever must be in proposing a plan of reform.
“ The number of gentlemen who were hostile to reform,
“ were a phalanx which ought to give alarm to any indivi-
“ dual upon rising to suggest such a measure. Those who,
“ with a sort of superstitious awe, reverence the constitution
“ so much as to be fearful of touching even its defects, had
“ always reprobated every attempt to purify the representa-
“ tion. They acknowledged its inequality and corruption,
“ but in their enthusiasm for the grand fabric, they would
“ not

“ not suffer a reformer with unhallowed hands to repair the
“ injuries which it suffered from time. Others, who per-
“ ceiving the deficiencies that had arisen from circum-
“ stances, were solicitous of their amendment, yet resisted
“ the attempt, under the argument, that when once we had
“ presumed to touch the Constitution in one point, the awe
“ which had heretofore kept us back from the daring enter-
“ prize of innovation, might abate, and there was no fore-
“ seeing to what alarming lengths we might progressively go
“ under the mask of Reformation. Others there were, but
“ for these he confessed he had not the same respect, who
“ considered the present state of representation as pure and
“ adequate to all its purposes, and perfectly consistent with
“ the first principles of representation. The fabric of the
“ House of Commons was an ancient pile, on which they
“ had been all taught to look with reverence and awe:
“ from their cradles they had been accustomed to view it as
“ a pattern of perfection; their ancestors had enjoyed free-
“ dom and prosperity under it; and therefore an attempt to
“ make any alterations in it, would be deemed by some en-
“ thusiastic admirers of antiquity, as impious and sacrilegi-
“ ous. No one revered the venerable fabric more than he
“ did; but all mankind knew, that the best institutions, like
“ human bodies, carried in themselves the seeds of decay and
“ corruption; and therefore he thought himself justifiable in
“ proposing remedies against this corruption, which the
“ frame of the constitution must necessarily experience in
“ the lapse of years, if not prevented by wise and judicious
“ regulations.

“ The argument of withstanding all reformation, from
“ the fear of the ill consequences that might ensue, made
“ gentlemen

“ gentlemen come to a sort of compromise with themselves.
“ We are sensible of certain defects; we feel certain inconveniences in the present state of representation; but fearing that we may make it worse by alteration, we will be content with it as it is.” This was a sort of argument to which he could not give his countenance. If gentlemen had at all times been content with this sort of average, the nation would have lost much of that excellence of which our Constitution now had to boast.

“ If there always had been a House of Commons who were the faithful stewards of the interests of their country, the diligent checks on the administration of the finances, the constitutional advisers of the executive branch of the Legislature, the steady and uninfluenced friends of the People, he asked, IF THE BURDENS WHICH THE CONSTITUENTS OF THAT HOUSE WERE NOW DOOMED TO ENDURE, WOULD HAVE BEEN INCURRED? Would the People of England have suffered the calamities to which they had lately been made subject?

“ He needed not, he believed, to enumerate the arguments that presented themselves to his mind in favor of a reform. Every gentleman who had taken pains to investigate the subject, must see that it was most materially wanted. To conquer the corruption that existed in those decayed boroughs, he believed that gentlemen would acknowledge to be impossible. The temptation were too great for poverty to resist, and the consequence of this corruption was so visible, that some plan of reforming the boroughs had clearly become absolutely necessary. In times
“ of

“ of calamity and distress, how truly important was it to the
“ people of this country that the House of Commons
“ should sympathize with themselves, and that their inter-
“ rests should be indissoluble? It was most material that
“ the People should have confidence in their own branch of
“ the Legislature; the force of the Constitution, as well as
“ its beauty, depended on that confidence, and on the union
“ and sympathy which existed between the constituent and
“ representative. The source of our glory and the muscles
“ of our strength were the pure character of freedom
“ which our Constitution bore. To lessen that character,
“ to taint it, was to take from our vitals a part of their vi-
“ gor, and to lessen not only our importance but our
“ energy with our neighbours.

“ The purity of representation was the only true and per-
“ manent source of such confidence; for though occasion-
“ ally bright characters had arisen, who, in spite of the ge-
“ neral corruption and depravity of the day in which they
“ lived, had manifested the superior influence of integrity
“ and virtue, and had forced both Parliament and People to
“ countenance their Administration; yet it would be un-
“ wise for the People of England to leave their fate to the
“ chance of such characters often arising, when prudence
“ must dictate that the certain way of securing their pro-
“ perties and freedom was to purify the sources of represen-
“ tation, and to establish that strict relation between them-
“ selves and the House of Commons which it was the ori-
“ ginal idea of the Constitution to create. He hoped that
“ the plan which he had mentioned was likely to re-esta-
“ blish such a relation; and he recommended to gentlemen
“ not to suffer their minds to be alarmed by unnecessary
fears.

“ fears. NOTHING WAS SO HURTFUL TO IMPROVEMENT
 “ AS THE FEAR OF BEING CARRIED FARTHER THAN
 “ THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH A PERSON SET OUT.

“ It was common for gentlemen to reason with them-
 “ selves, and to say that they would have no objection to go
 “ so far, and no farther, if they were sure, that in counte-
 “ nancing the first step, they might not either be led them-
 “ selves, or lead others farther than they intended to go.
 “ So much they were apt to say was right—so far they
 “ would go—of such a scheme they approved—but fearing
 “ that it might be carried too far, they desisted from doing
 “ even what they conceived to be proper. He deprecated
 “ this conduct, and hoped that gentlemen would come to
 “ the consideration of this business, without fearing that it
 “ would lead to consequences that would either ruin or
 “ alarm us.”

Debrett's Parliamentary Register for 1785, p. 43, et seq.

No. IX.

Extracts from the speech of
 Mr. Thomas Pitt, Propri-
 etor of Old Sarum, on the
 7th of May 1783.

“ THAT his honorable
 “ friend had truly stated that
 “ the principal objection that
 “ had been urged to what he
 “ then proposed, the going in-
 “ to

Extracts from the speech of
 the Right Hon. William
 Pitt, Chancellor of the Ex-
 chequer, on the 30th of
 April, 1792.

“ It was obvious, Mr. Pitt
 “ said, to every rational and
 “ reflecting man, that two
 “ objects present themselves
 “ for

“ to a committee to examine
 “ into the state of the repre-
 “ sentation, was that no spe-
 “ cific remedy was then sub-
 “ mitted to the House ; and
 “ that at a time when wild
 “ and impracticable ideas of
 “ reform, and visionary spe-
 “ culations of imagined rights
 “ were floating on the pub-
 “ lic, such a committee
 “ would tend to alarm the
 “ minds of sober men, to in-
 “ flame the madness of theo-
 “ rists, and to hold out expect-
 “ tations that neither could,
 “ nor ought, nor were in-
 “ tended to be satisfied.

“ That it was true that the
 “ temper of the times, was a
 “ very great additional ground
 “ to the opposition which he
 “ gave to the former motion ;
 “ and that he certainly could
 “ have wished, that what-
 “ ever alterations were to
 “ take place could have been
 “ brought on at a time,
 “ when men’s minds were
 “ less heated by speculative
 “ opinions ; that however he

“ could

“ for their consideration ; the
 “ first, the probability of car-
 “ rying a Reform in Parlia-
 “ ment at all ; and the other,
 “ whether or not that Re-
 “ form, if carried, would not
 “ be attended with a risk
 “ that would outweigh the
 “ advantages that might ac-
 “ crue from it. To the first,
 “ he declared, he did not
 “ think that Gentlemen
 “ would readily be persuaded
 “ to believe by what they
 “ had seen, and by what they
 “ knew, that there existed
 “ any alteration in the minds
 “ of the people tending to
 “ shew that a change in their
 “ Representation would be
 “ agreeable to their wishes ;
 “ there was infinitely greater
 “ reason to believe that an
 “ attempt to carry any scheme
 “ into effect would produce
 “ consequences to which no
 “ man can look without hor-
 “ ror and apprehension.

“ That there were out of
 “ that House men who were
 “ anxious to destroy the Con-
 “ stitution

" could not but congratulate
 " that House, and the coun-
 " try in general, that these
 " dangerous doctrines were
 " disavowed by a person of
 " the weight of the right ho-
 " norable mover of these re-
 " solutions, as well in what
 " he had so ably stated in his
 " opening, as in the proposi-
 " tions themselves; which if
 " adopted by the House,
 " would stand as the strongest
 " protest against these wild
 " speculations. That an ho-
 " norable friend of his (Mr.
 " Powys) had read such ex-
 " tracts from some of these
 " incendiaries, as could not
 " fail to make known the
 " tendency of their tenets;
 " that he had never thought,
 " with all the industry that
 " had been used, that such
 " opinions had extended very
 " far in the body of the peo-
 " ple; and that he was con-
 " vinced, that even by the
 " interval of a few months
 " they

" stitution he was perfectly
 " ready to admit: that their
 " numbers were great, or
 " their power vigorous he was
 " happy enough to doubt;
 " their force, he was persuad-
 " ed, if it should come to be
 " opposed to the sound part
 " of the Constitution and its
 " defenders, would be found
 " to be weak and trivial. He
 " did not, Mr. Pitt declared,
 " deem the conduct of those
 " Members of Parliament to
 " be the most meritorious,
 " who agitated the propriety
 " of a Reform in the shape
 " of an Advertisement in the
 " newspaper, * rather than
 " by discussions in that
 " House; he would not,
 " however, enter on that
 " point, as he was willing to
 " impute the best motives to
 " every man. As far, Mr.
 " Pitt said, as he had had op-
 " portunities of learning the
 " opinions of the people, and
 " of observing their condi-
 " tion

* For the decency and consistency with which the Right Hon. Gentleman makes this remark. See the Resolutions at the Thatched House Tavern, No. VI. of this Appendix.

“ they had already visibly
 “ subsided amongst many of
 “ the most zealous.

“ That he could not, at
 “ the same time that he ap-
 “ proved of such an experi-
 “ ment, even in the present
 “ moment deny the weight
 “ of such arguments as were
 “ founded upon the unrea-
 “ sonable spirit of innovation,
 “ which certainly his ho-
 “ norable friend could not
 “ suppose it was in his power
 “ to satisfy by such conces-
 “ sions as these, or indeed
 “ by any practicable reform
 “ whatever. The clamor
 “ would not be appeased by
 “ it among those who are the
 “ loudest in their calls for al-
 “ terations; he wished there-
 “ fore sincerely, that some
 “ such plan had already taken
 “ place in times of more
 “ calm and sober judgment.

“ tion, he had reason to
 “ think them perfectly tran-
 “ quil and happy: the prin-
 “ ciples, however, that some
 “ men had adopted, tended,
 “ he feared, to overturn that
 “ tranquillity, and destroy
 “ that happiness. In regard
 “ to that matter, however,
 “ he had a stronger reason
 “ for his conduct; he was
 “ firmly convinced that the
 “ allies to whom the Hon.
 “ Gentleman was to look for
 “ support, were not those
 “ whose object was to repair
 “ the Constitution, but to sap
 “ the foundation, and destroy
 “ the edifice; they were per-
 “ sons who had condemned
 “ hereditary monarchy, a-
 “ bused aristocracy, and de-
 “ cried all proper and regu-
 “ lated Government what-
 “ ever; men, who while
 “ they for one minute talked
 “ of a Parliamentary Re-
 “ form, libelled the Revolu-
 “ tion itself the other, who
 “ ridiculed the idea of rank
 “ and subordination, and en-
 “ deavoured to impress upon
 “ the

“ the mind of the public, a
“ desire to substitute for the
“ happy constitution they at
“ present enjoy, a plan found-
“ ed on what was absurdly
“ termed the Rights of Man ;
“ a plan which never existed
“ in any part of the habitable
“ globe, and which, if it
“ should exist in the morn-
“ ing, must perish ere sun-
“ set ; as must be the inevita-
“ ble fate of the government
“ of any kingdom which
“ should be formed on that
“ absurd and impracticable
“ system. To the last hour
“ of his life, Mr. Pitt de-
“ clared, he was determined
“ to maintain and defend
“ the Constitution of his
“ country, for he was
“ convinced that it was the
“ best that ever was formed
“ for the happiness of men ;
“ and he was convinced that
“ there existed no chance of
“ success from the proceed-
“ ings of the Hon. Gentle-
“ man, and from any frauds
“ which might be practised,
“ but that they tended to risk

“ the incurring consequences
 “ the most dreadful. Were
 “ he put to the disagreeable
 “ alternative of giving his
 “ vote for ever to forego re-
 “ form, or to risk the inevit-
 “ able and dreadful conse-
 “ quences which would arise
 “ from the attempts, if per-
 “ mitted, of the new reform-
 “ ers, he declared upon his
 “ honour, as an English-
 “ man, and as a friend to
 “ the Constitution, that he
 “ should have no doubt of
 “ voting the former. Thus
 “ much, Mr. Pitt said, he
 “ had offered as to the *time* of
 “ bringing forward the busi-
 “ ness, which, when coupled
 “ with the *mode*, rendered it
 “ still more dangerous. The
 “ minds of men were led
 “ to no plan, nor had they
 “ any grievance stated to
 “ them. Their opinions
 “ were set afloat, * and their
 “ understandings were endea-
 “ voured to be poisoned by

* The Reader is again requested to study the character of Mr. Pitt in the
 contrast between this assertion and the Thatched House Resolution.

APPENDIX.

19

“ the general assertion of the
“ existence of grievances,
“ and the inadequacy of the
“ Representation in Parlia-
“ ment: they had that held
“ out to them as innocent
“ and harmless, which was de-
“ structive and iniquitous.”

FINIS.